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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 000069

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STATE FOR AF/E, AF/RSA AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/15
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SUBJECT: Somalia - Italian Foreign Minister Re-Affirms Support for
TFG in January 14 Meeting with President Sharif

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert Patterson, Counselor for Somalia Affairs, State
Department, Somalia Unit; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Brief conversations with the Transitional
Federal Government's (TFG) Ambassador to Kenya, TFG President
Sharif's Chief-of-Staff, and Italian Special Envoy to the TFG on
January 15 suggest that the January 14 meeting between Italian
Foreign Minister Frattini and Sharif produced agreement in the
following areas:

* Frattini agreed to "advocate for and support" the TFG in
the international community. He promised that the TFG would be on
his agenda for discussions in Cairo this weekend, as well as for
what the Envoy told us would be a January 25 Frattini meeting with
the Secretary in Washington. The Italian Foreign Minister also
said that he would raise Somalia in connection with discussions of
Yemen at the January 28 London meeting. Frattini finally said that
he would urge laggard countries to fulfill their Brussels ICG
pledges.

* The GOI will provide funding to key TFG ministries, among
them the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and
the Ministry of National Security.

* The GOI will support Radio Mogadishu and independent
media.

* The political commitment to open a GOI embassy in
Mogadishu was re-affirmed.

* The GOI committed to have its Carabinieri train a TFG
counterpart in Kenya.

* The GOI made a "cautious offer" to conduct a pilot
project on TFG coast guard training.

¶2. (C) Summary continued: The media reported that Frattini
in a subsequent press conference described the TFG as the "best

chance for Somalia," and said that he saw no alternative to it.
End summary.

¶3. (C) Brief telephone conversations on January 15 with Italian Special Envoy to the TFG Dejak, Somalia's Ambassador to Kenya Nur, and President Sharif's Chief-of-Staff Jama all suggested that President Sharif's January 14 meeting with Italian Foreign Minister Frattini had been seen positively by both sides. Dejak said that Frattini committed during the meeting to "advocate and support" the TFG among members of the international community. He promised that the TFG would be on his agenda for bilateral discussions in Cairo this weekend. He also said that he would plug for the TFG during what Dejak said was a January 25 meeting with the Secretary in Washington. Frattini would also look for an opportunity to have his government discuss Somalia during meetings on Yemen in London on January 28.

¶4. (C) Frattini as well promised to push his EU colleagues and others in the international community to fulfill their Brussels ICG pledges. Per Dejak, Frattini provided a very conditional endorsement of a follow-on reconstruction conference, saying that it should only occur if there were some assurance that donors would be willing to commit new resources.

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¶5. (SBU) In a subsequent press conference, Frattini confirmed GOI support for the TFG terming it, according to media accounts here "the best chance for Somalia."

¶6. (C) Dejak, Jama, and Nur, who were all at the Sharif - Frattini meeting, agreed that the GOI had committed to provide funding to key ministries: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of National Security. It was not clear if the GOI planned to wholly fund those ministries, fund salaries alone, or fund certain of the ministries' activities. (Note: in an unrelated conversation January 14, French secondee to the European Commission in Nairobi, Jeremie Robert, told us that the EC was willing to pay TFG ministers' salaries. The EC has already agreed in principle to resume payment, at a reduced monthly rate, of MPs' salaries. End note.)

¶7. (C) Dejak said that Frattini had focused on the importance of the "propaganda war," and had promised unspecified support for the TFG's Radio Mogadishu, as well as for Somalia's independent media.

¶8. (C) The Italian Foreign Minister had frequently stressed the need to improve security. To that end, he renewed a commitment to have the Carabinieri provide training to the TFG "Darawish" at a location in Kenya. (Note: the "Darawish" are a gendarmerie. They were deployed in the Barre era to quell uprisings and in quasi-combat tasks. End note.)

¶9. (C) Also tabled by Frattini was what Dejak termed a "cautious offer" to undertake a pilot project with the TFG's very nascent coast guard. The GOI Foreign Minister also promised "refresher courses" for an unspecified number of Barre-era military officers.

¶10. (C) According to Nur, in addition to renewing an Italian pledge, made at the 2009 Rome ICG, to re-open its embassy in Mogadishu, Frattini said that his government would work toward

recognition of Somali passports.

¶11. (C) Finally, Dejak said that Frattini had agreed to provide unspecified further security assistance. (Note: It is possible that Dejak was referring to an Italian grant of 1.7 Euros, to be routed through UNOPS, that would inter alia buy at least one armored car for the TFG leadership, as well as jammers to counter certain kinds of IEDs, a secure telephone system, and other items.
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